FACT SHEET
2021 KIDS COUNT® Data Book

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2021 KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK FACT SHEET

The *KIDS COUNT® Data Book* has provided an examination of child well-being in the United States every year since 1990.

This year's edition reflects the conditions that faced children and families immediately before and in the midst of a devastating public health crisis and on the precipice of parents' receiving unprecedented support from the federal government.

THE 16 KIDS COUNT INDEX INDICATORS FROM 2010–19

Four domains comprise the KIDS COUNT index, which is intended to be a concise means of tracking child well-being to compel policy action and solutions that improve outcomes for children in the United States. These domains are (1) Economic Well-Being, (2) Education, (3) Health and (4) Family and Community. Each domain includes four indicators, for a total of 16. These indicators represent the most-recently available federal data to measure the status of child well-being nationally and in states.

Economic Well-Being
- Children in poverty (income of $25,926 for a family of two adults and two children in 2019)
- Children whose parents lack secure employment (no full-time, year-round work)
- Children living in a household with a high housing cost burden (spend more than 30 percent of pretax income on housing)
- Teens not in school and not working (ages 16–19)

Education
- Young children not in school (ages 3–4)
- Fourth-graders not proficient in reading
- Eighth-graders not proficient in math
- High school students not graduating on time

Health

■ Low birth-weight babies

■ Children without health insurance

■ Child and teen deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–19

■ Teens who are overweight or obese (ages 10–17)

Family and Community

■ Children living in single-parent families

■ Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma

■ Children living in high-poverty areas

■ Teen births per 1,000 females ages 15–19

NATIONAL TRENDS IN CHILD WELL-BEING SINCE 2010

Encouraging trends in child well-being began to emerge over the past decade, with improvements in 11 out of the 16 indicators. The 2019 data showed that more parents were economically secure and lived without a high housing cost burden, and more teens graduated from high school and delayed childbearing.

All four Economic Well-Being indicators improved. In 2019, fewer children were living in poverty, more parents were employed and fewer families were spending a disproportionate amount of their income on housing costs. The most improvement was in the percentage of teens not in school and not working. Nonetheless, in 2019, nearly one in six children lived in poverty.

Meanwhile, two of the four Education indicators — fourth-grade reading proficiency and high school graduation — showed improvement. Notably, with 86% of high school students graduating on time in the 2018–19 school year, the nation's graduation rate reached an all-time high.

The Health domain saw mixed results. Far fewer children lacked access to health insurance coverage in 2019 than in 2010. However, 2019 was the first increase in the percentage of uninsured children within the past decade. Data also show that after seeing increases three years straight, the percentage of babies born with low birth weight has leveled off at 8.3%.

Trends in the Family and Community domain were for the most part encouraging. Improvements were seen in the teen birth rate, a smaller percentage of children were living with parents who lacked a high school diploma and children living in high poverty communities improved for the fourth year in a row. After a steady decline since 2010, the teen birth rate remained unchanged between 2018 and 2019.

HOUSEHOLD PULSE SURVEY (PANDEMIC INDICATORS)

Prior to the pandemic many KIDS COUNT indicators were trending in a positive direction. Then COVID-19 hit. Schooling, employment and lives were interrupted or ended. Since the traditional indicators of the *Data Book* rely on data for which 2019 is the most recent year available, the Foundation used response data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey to illuminate the challenges facing families during the COVID-19 crisis. We included the following indicators from the survey:

- Households with children that sometimes or often do not have enough to eat.
- Households with children who have slight or no confidence they will pay rent or mortgage on time.
- Adults living in households with children who do not have health insurance
- Adults living in households with children who felt down, depressed or hopeless
- Households with children who have internet and computer available for education
- Households that had at least one adults who reduced or canceled plans for post-secondary classes

The Foundation's analysis of the survey during the last half of 2020 found that:

- More than one in eight adults with children in the household (13%) reported a lack of health insurance. This figure was 23% for Latinos, 18% for those of two or more races or another race and 15% for Black households.
- Nearly one in four adults living in households with children (23%) said they felt down, depressed or hopeless, with those of two or more races or another race most affected (28%).
- More than one in five households with children (22%), said they had only slight confidence or no confidence at all that they would be able to make their next rent or mortgage payment on time. More than a third of Black (37%) and Latino (35%) households faced this disastrous challenge.
- About one in seven adults with children (14%) said that in the most recent week, their household sometimes or always did not have enough to eat. The percentages for Black households (25%), families of two or more races or another race (21%) and Latino households (20%) with children were about twice the rates for their white (10%) and Asian (9%) counterparts.

STATE RANKINGS

Composite scores from each of the four domains are translated into a single ranking which is used to rank states on how children are faring. All indicators are equally weighted in the domain and overall rankings. The *Data Book* includes data from the District of Columbia, but the District is not ranked among the states.

Top Five States Overall: Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Minnesota, Vermont, Utah
Bottom Five States Overall: Texas, Alabama, Louisiana, New Mexico, Mississippi

Economic Well-Being: Top five states: North Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wyoming, Utah
Bottom five states: West Virginia, Alaska, New Mexico, Louisiana, Mississippi

Education: Top five states: New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire
Bottom five states: Nevada, Arizona, Louisiana, Alaska, New Mexico

Health: Top five states: Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Vermont, Washington
Bottom five states: South Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi

Family and Community: Top five states: New Hampshire, Utah, Vermont, Maine, Wyoming
Bottom five states: Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Mississippi

Release Information

The *2021 KIDS COUNT® Data Book* will be available June 21 at 12:01 a.m. EDT at www.aecf.org. Additional information is available at www.aecf.org/databook. Journalists interested in creating maps, graphs and rankings in stories about the *Data Book* can use the KIDS COUNT Data Center at datacenter.kidscount.org.

About the Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation creates a brighter future for the nation's children by developing solutions to strengthen families, build paths to economic opportunity and transform struggling communities into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit www.aecf.org. KIDS COUNT® is a registered trademark of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.